

XXVIII.—*Letters, Extracts, and Notes.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed "To the Editors of 'The Ibis'":—

SIRS,—I will ask you to allow me to correct two errors in my article on the breeding-seasons of birds in Southern Kamerun, which I have only lately discovered.

In the explanation of text-fig. 6, 'Ibis,' 1908, p. 562, the line stated to represent the "Rainfall at Duala" is the line intended for Ebolwoa, and that stated to represent the "Rainfall at Ebolwoa" is the one for Duala.

In the ninth line from the bottom of the same page the rainfall for the year at Ebolwoa should be 1·8 metre instead of "1·1 metre."

Yours &c.,

GEORGE L. BATES.

Bitye, in the interior from Kribi,
Kamerun,
27th Jan., 1909.

SIRS,—In the 'Jubilee Supplement' of 'The Ibis' (page 86) a mistake has occurred as regards the Pigeons of the Canaries and Madeira (line 20 from the bottom). It should have been stated that Godman pointed out the difference between *Columba laurivora* of Gomera and *C. trocaz* of Madeira, and also described a third species from Teneriffe which he called *C. bollii*.

I shall be obliged if you will insert this correction in the next part of the 'Ibis.'

Yours &c.,

F. D. GODMAN.

45 Pont Street, London,
May 24th, 1909.

SIRS,—In the last issued part of 'The Ibis' (above, p. 291) my friend Mr. M. J. Nicoll has proposed to call the White-spotted Bluethroat "*Cyanecula suecica leucocyana*," but in this I cannot agree with him, for the following reasons:—I

have examined many specimens of the form with the blue gorget, and have found that almost all of them had a small spot of white on the middle of the throat. In several of them this spot was scarcely larger than a pin's head, and in one, which had an apparently unspotted blue gorget, I discovered by close examination, on moving the central feathers, a slight white speck. It appears to me, therefore, that the form with the blue gorget is merely an individual variety of the white-spotted bird, and not even a subspecies, and that the older birds have usually a larger white spot than the younger ones. Brehm described the unspotted Bluethroat in 1822 (Beitr. zur Vögelk. ii. p. 173) as *Sylvia wolfii*, and in the following year (Lehrb. d. Naturg. i. p. 344) figured it with an unspotted blue gorget on the same plate as a specimen with a small white spot, which latter he called *Sylvia suecica*. As, therefore, I consider the bird with an unspotted (or apparently unspotted) blue gorget to be specifically inseparable from the white-spotted bird, I consider that they should both stand as *Cyanecula wolfii* (C. L. Brehm), 1822, and not as *Cyanecula leucocyana* C. L. Brehm, as described by him in his 'Vögel Deutschlands' (p. 352) in 1831.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,

H. E. DRESSER.

44 Hornton Court, Kensington, W.,
20th May, 1909.

SIRS,—The White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) was until lately regarded as a bird of rare and irregular appearance in Southern Italy, where a single specimen was obtained in the winter of 1870, as has been mentioned by Prof. Costa. It has been recorded also from Tuscany and from near Rome. In the north-eastern districts, Lombardy and Venetia, the species is less rare, and of irregular appearance during winter months almost every year. But it does not seem to have occurred on the Puglie, in Calabria, or on the islands in the Mediterranean. Last year, however, in December, large flocks of this bird arrived in the Capitanata and the large marshes of Manfredonia, and stayed the whole

winter. Many specimens were caught, and about one hundred were brought to and sold in the markets of Florence. I believe that about sixty of them were preserved, and are now in the Museum of Florence, in my own Museum, and in the collections of Marquis Ridolfi, Messrs. Pierotti, Ragonieri, Zaffagnini, Signorina Picchi, &c., all from Florence.

After the many specimens I have examined, I think it useful to state that in its general brown colouring this Goose varies very much, and shews considerable differences, and that such variations are not dependent on either sex or age. The number of teeth on the side of the upper mandible is usually about 28, and more seldom 26.

From information received from Manfredonia I find that this Goose was met with there in parties of all sizes, but more often in small flocks of four or five than in larger companies, cackling incessantly when in flight. They frequented localities rich in aquatic grasses rather than the corn- and stubble-fields. The flight of these Geese was either continuous and uninterrupted, or gradual, with more or less prolonged halts at convenient feeding-grounds. They fed exclusively, so far as my information goes, on vegetable matter, tender shoots of grass, water-weeds, young corn and other spring crops, and on grain of all kinds. These Geese were extremely shy, cautious, and well on the alert when feeding, so that it was very difficult to approach them.

This Goose is highly esteemed as a table bird and the flesh is delicious, but everything depends on the food that the birds last fed on.

Some young birds in the first plumage with the white feathering entirely absent on the top of forehead and along the base of the upper mandible and replaced by black or brown-black were mistaken for *A. brachyrhynchus*, but in the large number at my disposal I was unable to find a single Pink-footed Goose.

I am, Sirs, yours &c.,

COUNT E. ARRIGONI DEGLI ODDI.

Padua,
April 21st, 1909.
